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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: ICE EXPERTS DELIVER TIP TRAINING

REF: 08 BUENOS AIRES 761

¶1. Summary. In an effort to strengthen the Argentine government's anti-trafficking efforts, Post's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Attaché Office in coordination with the political section brought down two ICE experts to address three conferences on trafficking in persons (TIP). The first conference was organized by the University of Buenos Aires and attracted over 500 civil society participants. The second was organized by the province of Cordoba which drew over 200 prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officials at the federal and provincial levels. The third was a regional conference organized by the GOA's Ministry of Justice which brought over 300 law enforcement and other government officials as well as a few Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) representatives from MERCOSUR members and associate states. Training was well-received and demonstrated strong GOA and civil society interest in strengthening local capacity to effectively investigate and prosecute TIP crimes. Conference participants expressed an interest in additional training on topics such as the role NGOs can play in TIP investigations, techniques on pursuing money laundering investigations as predicate offenses, how to identify and seize assets of traffickers. Post will continue to work with GOA and civil society actors to identify new opportunities for further collaboration. End summary.

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ICE Experts Offer TIP Training  
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¶2. Post's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Attaché Office, in coordination with the political section, brought down two ICE experts to address three conferences on trafficking in persons (TIP) as a follow up to Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Julie Myers, offer to Minister of Justice Anibal Fernandez to offer of USG assistance in fighting TIP (reftel). National Program Managers (NPM) Gabriel Gonzalez and Katerina Karousos from the ICE Headquarters, Office of Investigations, Human Smuggling and Trafficking Unit, traveled to Argentina in early June to serve as Subject Matter Experts (SME) at three separate TIP conferences.

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ICE Experts Share Best Practices with Latin America NGOs  
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¶3. The first conference, was held June 4-6, 2008. Entitled the &First Latin American Congress Regarding Human Smuggling and Trafficking8, attracted over 500 civil society actors from all over Latin America and was organized by the

University of Buenos Aires Social Sciences Department. The conference was to outline Argentina's initial steps in combating TIP, human smuggling and child sexual exploitation/pornography and to facilitate an exchange of ideas and investigative methodologies. NPM Gonzalez served as one of eight experts on a panel that offered &Reflections on Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Latin America and the World8 where he explained ICE's role as lead agency of the USG's anti-trafficking effort. NPM Gonzalez was the only government law enforcement expert on the panel. The panel consisted primarily of directors and representatives of NGOs from Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Peru, and the Caribbean. Other panels included conceptual political discussions related to Human Smuggling and Trafficking, Trafficking and Prostitution, Trafficking of Women and Children, Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Latin America and the World, Challenges Regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, and Identifying Organizations Combating Human Trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean.

¶4. NPM Gonzalez and Karousos also delivered presentations which focused on sharing best practices in prosecuting and investigating human smuggling and trafficking, and empowering victims of trafficking. They presented a short USG public service announcement in Spanish on how TIP victims can call a national hotline to receive help. They also presented a case study of a recent bust of a Mexican human trafficking ring to illustrate the importance of international cooperation in TIP investigations. They also noted the key role that NGOs play in tipping off law enforcement authorities of potential crimes and providing assistance to TIP victims. Approximately 100 participants from various NGOs, the University of Buenos Aires, local and federal law enforcement, and the general public attended. In the Question and Answer session that followed, participants expressed admiration for how seriously USG law enforcement authorities take TIP investigations. One participant noted that civil society has a hard time trusting law enforcement authorities to do anything, complaining that many are corrupt. At the conclusion of the presentation, various NGOs requested assistance with ongoing human trafficking cases. NPM Gonzalez and NPM Karousos forwarded these leads and contact information to the ICE Attache for evaluation.

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ICE Offers Workshop to Eager Audience in Cordoba Province

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¶5. NPM Gonzalez, NPM Karousos and ICE Assistant Attache also traveled to Cordoba, Argentina to provide training on Human Smuggling and Trafficking at the Cordoba Provincial Criminal Investigative Academy. The training was offered in response to a formal request for TIP training from Cordoba Province Attorney General Dr. Dario Vezzaro to the DCM. Dr. Vezzaro offered to cover travel and lodging costs for the TIP instructors. Post's ICE office agreed to coordinate the training and attended the conference.

¶6. The training workshop was hosted by Dr. Vezzaro, and the Chief of Police of Cordoba, Daniel Alejo Paredes. The twelve-hour block of instruction consisted of an Overview of Human Smuggling and Trafficking, Victim Services, Investigative Methodologies, Interviewing Techniques, Case Studies, and a Practical Exercise. Approximately 207 individuals from the Judicial Police, Airport Police, National Gendarmeria (U.S. Border Patrol-equivalent), Immigration, Provincial Secretary of Human Rights, Provincial Minister of Justice, Victim Assistance Unit, Federal and Local Courts of Cordoba, NGOs, and the Cordoba Police attended the training. Attendees showed a strong interest in the training subject matter, expressed a desire for additional training, and stated their willingness to work jointly with the USG to combat TIP. Law enforcement entities also realized the need for a more proactive outreach program to prevent TIP. Participants expressed an interest in additional training on 1) techniques to pursue financial (money laundering) investigations as predicate offenses in TIP cases; 2) how to identify and seize assets of

traffickers; and 3) how to improve the coordination of investigations between provincial and federal law enforcement authorities.

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ICE Offers Training Seminar to MERCOSUR  
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¶17. NPM Gonzalez and NPM Karousos also participated in the the First International Symposium of MERCOSUR and Associated States Regarding Human Trafficking and Child Pornography, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and Security in Buenos Aires. The conference began with keynote speeches from Minister of Justice Anibal Fernandez, the French Ambassador and Ambassador Wayne. The symposium was attended by approximately 300 individuals representing numerous NGOs, and international organizations such as the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the United Nations International Children,s Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and government entities from MERCOSUR members and associate states Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela as well as France and the United States. The symposium consisted of several panels of experts discussing experiences and best practices learned in pursuing Human Trafficking and Child Pornography investigations, in addition to briefings by representatives of countries belonging to MERCOSUR and Associated States, a presentation from TIP activist Susana Trimarco (the mother of a kidnapped daughter who is believed to be a trafficking victim), and eight concurrent training workshops.

¶18. During the symposium, NPM Gonzalez and NPM Karousos led the USG workshop entitled &Experiences in Conducting Human Trafficking Investigations and Empowering Victims.<sup>8</sup> The workshops were limited to 40 attendees and lasted six hours. The workshop was tasked to identify challenges, develop recommendations and conclusions for combating TIP. Drawing from ICE experiences, NPM Gonzalez shared methodologies and best practices in combating human smuggling and trafficking, including the distinction in identifying and investigating each crime. Participants included representatives from the Gendarmeria (Border Patrol) and the Prefectura Naval (Coast Guard-equivalent) and two NGOs that have worked closely with the GOA on TIP cases. Participants identified the following challenges to investigating and prosecuting TIP crimes effectively: 1) limited legal authority of the varied law enforcement entities to initiate human trafficking investigations, such as the inability to conduct an interview unless directed by a judge or prosecutor, 2) lack of confidence in effectively working together with other government entities in TIP cases; 3) the limited scope of Argentina,s asset forfeiture regime which is only allowed in the prosecution of drug trafficking crimes.

¶19. Participants made the following recommendations to improve MERCOSUR,s efforts to combat TIP: 1) reinstitute/enforce proper documentation and authorizations required of minors to enter or depart the country; 2) utilize investigative methodologies ) such as pursuing money laundering investigations as predicate offenses; 3) charge suspects with multiple offenses to increase the chances of stronger sentencing, and 4) identify and seize trafficker assets. Principal conclusions included the expressed need for capacity building within the law enforcement entities, additional outreach campaigns for prevention and reporting purposes, immediate issuance of benefits and assistance to victims, proper funding and resources to combat TIP, and enhanced interagency coordination as well as coordination between provincial and federal law enforcement authorities. Workshop participants presented their conclusions in the Congress, closing session and gave the conclusion to the symposium organizers for distribution to all participants.

¶10. Postscript: This cable was written last June. In preparing this year's input to the Annual Trafficking in Persons report, we discovered that the report had not been properly transmitted. Because of the importance of this

issue and the value of the June discussion, we are transmitting it now so that it receives appropriate distribution within the USG.

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